

# Devens Project Updates



**Date:** October 2018

**To:** Devens Enterprise Commission

**From:** Peter Lowitt, FAICP, Director and Neil Angus, AICP CEP, LEED AP, Environmental Planner

**RE:** October, 2017 to September 2018 Project Updates

## PREVIOUSLY PERMITTED PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

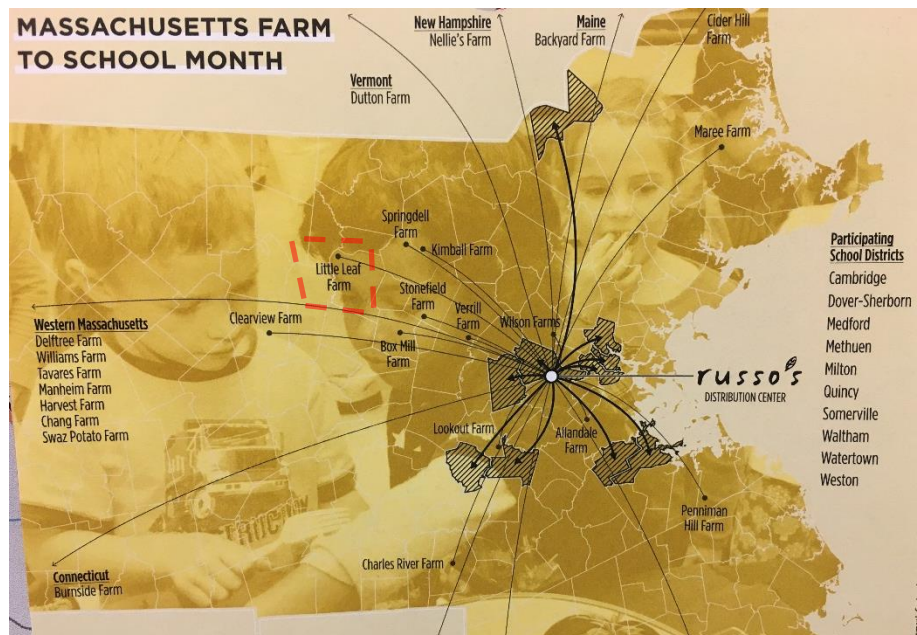
**105 Walker Road – Little Leaf Farms:** Construction is complete on the first two phases of this +/- 221,000 square-foot greenhouse on approximately 13 acres of land located at 105 Walker Road within the Environmental Business Zone on the North Post. The first phase included 114,404 sq.ft. of greenhouse and office space, a small parking area and utilities, including a large rainwater harvesting basin that is being used to collect roof runoff and supply up to 80% of the water needed for crop irrigation. The second phase included a 107,000 sq.ft. greenhouse expansion. The greenhouse operation grows hydroponic lettuce and leafy greens indoors in a completely automated fashion. The facility utilizes over 25,000 mobile gutters that automatically move the plants as they grow through their 25 day growing cycle.



*Phases 1 and 2 of Little Leaf Farms existing greenhouse – July 2018*

Little Leaf Farms harvests, packages and delivers lettuce to local grocers and food service providers in New England and has recently started providing lettuce to schools in Massachusetts as well. This project contributes to the locally grown movement in Massachusetts and to the sustainable redevelopment goal of the Devens Reuse Plan.

In February of this year, the DEC approved a third phase of greenhouse expansion that included an office and greenhouse expansion on the undeveloped 12 acre parcel of land located at 95 Walker Road (39-14-500) immediately adjacent to their existing facility. The owner intends to combine the two parcels and construct a 183,357 square-foot greenhouse and office expansion. Over the past year there have been a number of grow-light malfunctions that have caused nuisance conditions for neighbors. The malfunctions have since been addressed. There was also an unpermitted discharge of wash water from the facility which required the owner to install a septic system. This system is installed and currently in use.



*Massachusetts Farm to School distribution map.*

**66-68 Saratoga Boulevard Warehouse Expansion:** The construction of a 429,173 sq.ft. addition to the existing 411,000 sq.ft. building located at 66 and 68 Saratoga Blvd. (former Gillette warehouse and distribution facility, now home to Quiet Logistics, Sappi Paper and NEPW Logistics) is substantially complete. The addition accommodates additional warehousing and distribution uses and includes 210 new employee and visitor parking spaces, 53 trailer parking spaces, 55 new loading docks, a dual rail spur connecting into the east side of the building and a third rail spur connecting into the north side of the building. Additional site work also included stormwater management, lighting, landscaping and associated utility expansions and relocations, some of which is still being completed. Due to the size of the addition, the new portion of the building was built to meet the MA Stretch Energy Code requirements in accordance with the DEC's Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Requirements (974 CMR 4.11). The new rail spurs will have a significant impact on reducing additional truck traffic in the Devens region – an important multi-modal goal of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the redevelopment of Devens.



The existing portion of the building's rooftop is covered in solar panels and when complete, the proposed addition would be able to support an additional solar array that could generate an additional 1-2 MW of solar electricity – adding to the over 10% of Devens Utilities energy supply that is generated by renewables.

Due to the size of the building addition in relation to the site, the developer has a significant amount of excess topsoil. Working with Devens Engineering and Public Works, and in compliance with the Devens Soil Management Policy, the developer has relocated approximately 10,000 cubic yards of topsoil to the open



*New Rail spurs connecting into building addition at 66 Saratoga Boulevard – July 2018.*



*Rear of the new addition to 66 Saratoga Boulevard – July 2018.*

space area between the Bates Street housing area and Saratoga Boulevard. The topsoil was added to the existing landscape berm in this open space to raise the grade and provide better visual and noise buffering for residents along Bates Street from the industrial traffic on Saratoga Boulevard. Once all topsoil is relocated, the material will be stabilized/hydroseeded with a native New England conservation or wildflower seed mix and maintained as an open meadow which will further aid in screening.



**249 Barnum Road:** The redevelopment of the former Civilian Military Training Camp (CMTC) buildings on Barnum Road includes the renovation of 3 existing buildings totaling +/- 9,500 sf, and construction of a new +/- 4,665 sf building, including new parking, utilities and associated site improvements. The first of the three buildings has been completely renovated. The existing buildings vary in size between  $\pm 2,000$  sf and  $\pm 4,000$  sf, all are  $\pm 16'$  in height. These buildings are listed as eligible for the National Register of Historic Buildings and the alterations were all approved by MassHistoric. Some landscaping still needs to be completed and the buildings are not yet occupied but are being actively marketed for small business use. Similar to the development at 85 Patton Road, this project is also utilizing porous pavement to manage stormwater and treat and infiltrate it directly at the source. The project also includes a fourth building to be developed at a later phase.



249 Barnum Road former CMTC buildings, porous pavement parking lot and berm to screen from residential area – September 2018.

**112 Barnum Road – Rooftop Mounted Solar Photovoltaic System Installation:** The owners of 112 Barnum Road are finishing up the installation of close to 8,000 solar panels on the 450,000 square foot roof of the existing building. When complete and operational, these panels are expected to generate around 2.75 Mega Watts (MW) of renewable energy that will feed into the Devens grid.



Solar panels being installed on the roof of 112 Barnum Road – August 2018.



**Grant Road Housing – Emerson Green:** Construction is complete on the first phase (17 units) of this 124-unit mixed residential community off of Grant Road and all units are sold. These homes were built along a new, extended portion of Chance Street that now connects Elm Street, Buena Vista Street, Walnut Street and Antietam Street with Grant Road. This new portion of Chance street was constructed using the DEC's new Residential Street Design Standards which allow for narrower pavement widths, on-street parking, street trees and sidewalks on both sides of the street – creating a much more pedestrian-oriented streetscape designed for people first. The narrow pavement and rear lane garage access, coupled with the reduced lot sizes, minimal setbacks, and front porch designs help bring the homes closer to the street to create a safer, walkable and more interactive community.



*Emerson Green: New homes along the newly constructed portion of Chance Street looking east from Grant Road – September 2017*

The development includes a mix of single family and duplex homes, including deed restricted low and moderate-income affordable units. This helps to meet the Devens housing diversity and affordability goals in the Reuse Plan. These homes are highly energy efficient with Home Energy Rating Scale scores in the mid to high 30's – 60-65%

more efficient than a traditional home. The developer has come back to the DEC to modify the phasing plan and housing mix – reducing the number of 4-unit townhomes and increasing the number of duplexes.



*Emerson Green New Phasing Plan Approved by DEC – May 2018*

Modifications also included changes to the layout and configuration of the multi-family site (parking lot and drainage), as well changes to the park layouts. Construction on Phase 2 includes the reconstruction of Grant Road and two 20-unit apartment buildings has commenced and Grant Road is now closed while the developer clears the land and begins work on the underground utility services.



**BMS Campus Master Plan Improvements:** Throughout the past year, BMS has been undertaking a number of projects to further develop their 89 acre campus as their Biologics Center of Excellence. Interior fit out of the third floor of their new Clinical Manufacturing Building (CMB) created the need for a new loading dock, elevator and an additional 156 parking spaces. An additional improvement to their campus included the development of an outdoor walking trail, seating and activity area in the central portion of their campus.



*BMS campus improvements – outdoor walkways and seating area in woods – September 2018*

Due to the elevation change, this area has a series of meandering trails and steps that connect the Central Utilities Building and the lower part of the campus, with the new CMB, Biologics Development Building and all of the upper portion of the campus. The improvements include benches, lighting and lawn areas to provide their over 830 full-time employees with access to outdoor space for socializing, collaborating and decompressing.



*BMS Outdoor Landscaping Improvements – outdoor meeting area - September 2018*



**Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry Expansion:** In July, the DEC administratively approved the installation of a 12'x 28' cooler/freezer unit to be attached to the east side of the existing building, a new ADA accessible ramp in the rear of the building, and a 162 sq.ft. addition/vestibule to the north east side of the building located at 234 Barnum Road.



Front facade of Loaves and Fishes - September 2018



Close up of freezer/cooler addition behind fencing.



Close up of new entry vestibule.

All of these improvements were associated with the full interior reorganization and renovation of the food pantry to maximize the efficiency of their space and better accommodate their expanding services and operations. The cooler/freezer unit is well screened with fencing that matches the color of the building. The small addition/vestibule will allow for the relocation of the client entrance and will provide additional space for clients to wait inside the building during shopping days, instead of outside. The ADA access ramp in the rear will increase accessibility of the space and make loading and unloading easier for employees and clients.



New ADA Ramp in rear of facility.



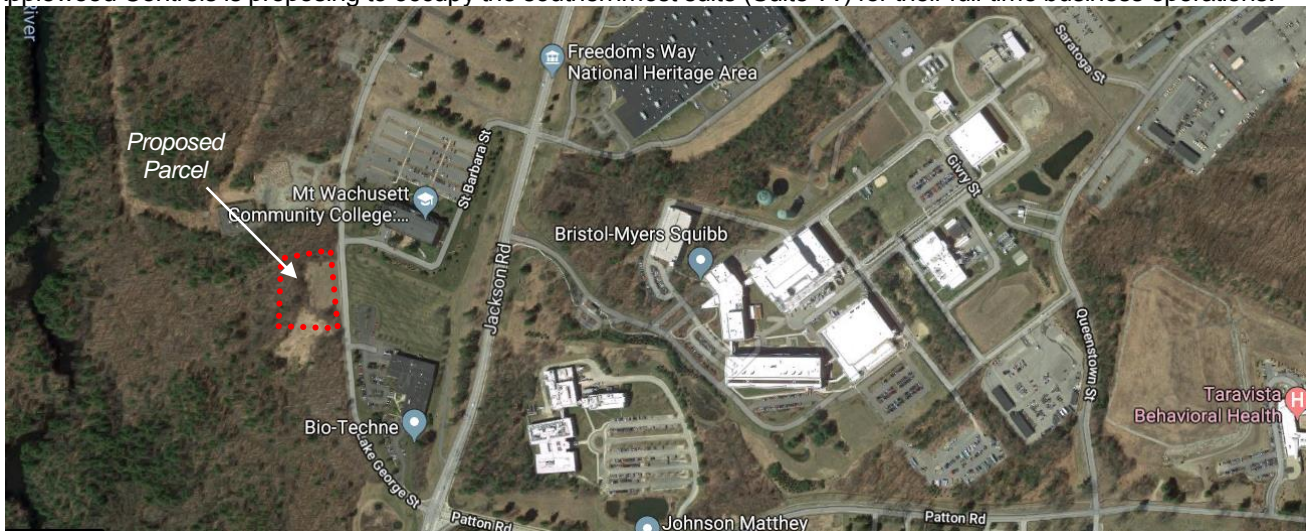
### RECENTLY PERMITTED PROJECTS (NOT YET UNDER CONSTRUCTION):

**McInnis Cement – 35 Saratoga Boulevard:** In June of 2018, the DEC approved McInnis Cement's proposed development of a Portland cement (ASTM C150) dry storage and distribution terminal on an existing 9.12 acre parcel of land located at 35 Saratoga Boulevard. The facility will consist of a gated (card access) one-way entry drive off of Barnum Road that would lead to two (2) 90+ foot high storage bins and associated loading/unloading equipment. The one-way access drive would continue through the site, exiting onto Saratoga Boulevard. Additional site improvements include a small control room building and utility building, utility connections, grading, drainage and landscaping. The facility will be supplied with cement via trucks from McInnis Cement's receiving port in Providence, RI. Trucks will be loaded in Providence, travel to Devens and off-load into the storage bins where it will be re-distributed to customers. The cement is kept dry at all times. The dry product is used by customers to produce concrete and concrete-related products (off-site). There is no manufacturing or mixing of this material on-site.



Due to the nature of the proposed facility operations (storage, loading and unloading processes), the project was granted a height variance for the cement storage silos from the 75' permitted maximum height, up to 93'.9" (not in Viewshed Overlay District). The Applicant also incorporated a number of design measures to minimize dust odor and noise from the facility operations, to ensure compliance with the DEC Industrial Performance Standards. Construction is expected to commence in the Spring of 2019.

**Applewood Controls:** In late September, the DEC issued a Unified Permit to Applewood Controls for the development of a one story, 15,000 square foot (SF) building, which will be constructed as three (3) separate "suites". The Unified Permit includes site plan, building permit and a wetland Notice of Intent. The property is located off Lake George Street, just behind the Mount Wachusett Community College building and west of the Nashua River. Applewood Controls is proposing to occupy the southernmost suite (Suite 'A') for their full-time business operations.



Suite 'A' will consist of 3,500 SF research/development and 1,500 SF office on the first floor, and a 1,500 SF loft area for supplemental office space. Suites 'B' and 'C' will each be 5,000 SF (3,500 SF research/development, and 1,500 SF office), and will be leased to others by Applewood Controls. The site layout includes 30 parking spaces and associated site utilities, drainage, landscaping, and lighting improvements. The property was a challenge to design and permit due to the adjacent wetland resource areas, as well as slope resource areas but the Applicant was able to design around these resources and still develop the site to meet their needs. Construction is expected to commence shortly.



**Shirley Commons Senior Housing:** In early 2017, the DEC issued a Unified Permit to the Women's Institute for the construction of a 58 unit affordable senior residential housing development (Shirley Commons) at 27 Hospital Road in the Shirley Village Growth District at the corner of Hospital Road and Elliot Road. This area was a former military housing neighborhood and former brownfield site that has been remediated to unrestricted standards. The project will consist of 58 units of rental housing for seniors (age-restricted to 62+) in a single three-story building. The project is designed to address the housing and service needs of seniors with incomes ranging from 60% Area Median Income (AMI) to 30% AMI. Housing units will be rental units and include both one- and two-bedroom apartments with full kitchen and bath in each, along with hallways designed to support the needs of those with disabilities. The building will include community spaces that will be used for social programming and offices for service staff, property management, flexible program space, community meetings and on-site medical visits. Site development, in addition to the building, includes a proposed 60-space parking lot and associated grading, drainage, lighting and landscaping. This is a proposed independent living facility (not an assisted living facility).



*Aerial of Shirley Village Growth District parcel Boundary off of Hospital Road.*



*Artist's rendering of Shirley Commons*

The project recently received additional funding support from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and is expected to break ground in the spring of 2019. The project is within walking distance of the Shirley Library and MBTA commuter rail station and MassDevelopment is expecting to use Complete Streets grant funding to upgrade sidewalks to connect this parcel/area with these amenities.



## RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS:

**29 Saratoga - Integra Expansion:** In October of 2017, Integra, an engineering, product, manufacturing and fabrication company, completed a 41,000 sq.ft. building expansion to their existing +/-29,000 square foot building situated between Ryerson Steel to the north and the US Army Post to the south. The expansion is now operational and being used for warehousing and office space. The expansion plans included the construction of 96 new parking spaces and upgrades to utilities, landscaping and the on-site stormwater management system.



*Existing building and new addition (far right) at 29 Saratoga Blvd. – September 2017*

The project also included a connection to the existing sidewalk system on Saratoga Boulevard and installation of bike racks to help encourage walking and biking in Devens. Preferred parking for carpool and electric vehicles was also installed to help reduce vehicular traffic and promote better air quality from lower vehicle emissions. To help ensure compliance with the Devens designated truck route, new signage was also installed on-site to direct trucks to the designated truck route.

## UPCOMING PROJECTS

**Clear Path for Veterans:** Clear Path for Veterans New England recently purchased 84 Antietam (former Eglomise building and base hospital). Clear Path for Veterans New England works with veterans to meet their needs as they reintegrate into society and is a great use for this building and for Devens. This former Army Post Hospital Building is located within the Fort Devens Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource under the Programmatic Agreement for the Base Closure and Disposal of Fort Devens, Massachusetts (1996). Clear Path is proposing a number of renovations to the interior and exterior of the building that will require review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the DEC acting as the local Historic Commission. The preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of this historic structure will preserve a cultural and historic part of former Fort Devens.



*Rendering of Clear Path New England's proposed renovations to 84 Antietam.*



## OTHER UPDATES:

**Devens Complete Streets:** In an effort to continue to redevelop Devens in a safe, healthy, smart and sustainable manner, the DEC partnered with MassDevelopment to adopt a Complete Streets Policy for Devens. The Complete Streets Policy includes a list of core commitments that the DEC and MassDevelopment have developed to further improve multi-modal accessibility for all Devens streets for all users. The complete policy is available on-line at: [http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens\\_Complete\\_Streets\\_Policy\\_Final\\_Adopted.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens_Complete_Streets_Policy_Final_Adopted.pdf). Through the adoption of this policy, the DEC and MassDevelopment were awarded a grant from MassDOT to undertake a Complete Streets Prioritization Planning process to evaluate existing road, sidewalk and trail conditions within Devens, and determine where there are accessibility issues, gaps, and improvements needed to ensure safe mobility for pedestrians, cars, trucks, bicycles, and all roadway users. As a former military base, Devens was always cut off from the surrounding communities. A main goal of the Devens Reuse Plan has been to re-connect Devens with the surrounding communities. Therefore, connectivity within Devens as well as with the surrounding communities was an important focus of this study.

Howard Stein Hudson was hired to assist Devens in developing this prioritization plan. The process to develop this plan included public meetings and numerous opportunities for community input. An online map was created to provide residents and businesses an opportunity to provide comments and feedback on issues/areas of concerns

(<http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/Devens.html#W781aNdKipo>). This public process highlighted gaps in the sidewalk network within Devens, gaps in bike infrastructure, the need for transit shelters, and the need to implement traffic calming measures in some areas to improve safety and reduce conflicts between residential and business uses. Specific projects were identified, detailed, and ranked. Hospital Road sidewalks to connect new senior residential development, additional bike lanes on Barnum and Grant Road, as well as multi-purpose trail connections and traffic calming measures to help divert truck traffic out of residential neighborhoods were examples of some of the projects that were identified. The full report is being finalized and will be published shortly. Once this report is accepted by MassDOT, Devens will be eligible for additional funding to construct priority projects within the plan.



*Jackson Road Complete Street Upgrades*

**Devens Shuttle Bus Service:** the DEC and MassDevelopment continue to partner with Devens businesses and the Towns of Ayer and Shirley to operate shuttle service in the Devens region. Working with Montachusett Area Regional Transit (MART) for over a year now, Devens has been serviced by a fixed route shuttle service between Shirley and Ayer. The Devens regional shuttle provides access to and from Devens, downtown Ayer, Nashoba Valley Medical Center, Ayer MBTA train station, Shirley Municipal Center and Shirley MBTA train station. This service also connects Devens to the communities of Fitchburg and Leominster - where surveys of Devens industries told us a large portion of their employees reside. In addition, this service provides residents of Devens, Shirley and Ayer the opportunity to connect to the Whitney Field and Orchard Hill Malls and the entire Montachusett Area Transit Authority bus system. Ridership continues to grow with over 120 riders per week at last count. This shuttle service, coupled with the recent improvements to the MBTA Fitchburg Line commuter rail, make a reverse transit commute from Boston to Devens possible – filling a huge gap in our sustainability picture for Devens. The full schedule can be found on-line at: [http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens_Schedule.pdf).





**Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness:** The DEC, acting in conjunction with MassDevelopment Devens, received a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness to Climate Change Planning Grant from the State to help understand, evaluate and plan for the anticipated impacts of climate change. The DEC and MassDevelopment hired VHB, Inc. to assist with completing a comprehensive, baseline climate change and natural hazard vulnerability assessment, and developing prioritized actions for dealing with priority hazards in Devens. The team gathered available background information on hazards, vulnerabilities and strengths, interviewed staff and volunteers, and conducted two 4-hour workshops to:

- Understand connections between ongoing community issues, hazards, and local planning and actions in the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (DREZ).
- Identify and map vulnerabilities and strengths to develop infrastructure, societal, and natural resource risk profiles for the DREZ.
- Develop and prioritize actions and clearly delineate next steps for the government, local organizations, businesses, private citizens, neighborhoods, and community groups.
- Identify opportunities to advance actions that further reduce the impact of hazards and increase resilience across and within DREZ.

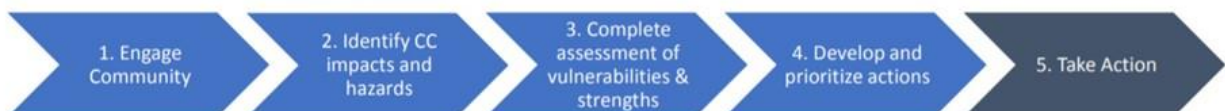
Surrounding towns of Ayer, Harvard and Shirley all participated in these workshops and provided valuable feedback to help ensure regional coordination. The full report is available on line at: [http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens MVP Report FINAL\\_052218\\_Compiled.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens_MVP_Report_FINAL_052218_Compiled.pdf) . This plan will help Devens become even more resilient and better able to prepare for and adapt to changing climate conditions (as well as become eligible for funding for mitigation and adaptation projects). Similar to the Devens Complete Streets Policy, the MVP Program will keep Devens on the leading edge of smart and safe sustainable development in the Commonwealth.



## Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)



**State and local partnership grant to build resiliency to climate change**





**Nashua Wild and Scenic River Designation:** With over 5 miles of the Nashua River running through the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone, the DEC has been an active participant and supporter of the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee for a number of years. The Committee was charged with identifying river-related outstandingly remarkable resource values, evaluating the eligibility and suitability of the rivers for designation, and developing a voluntary stewardship plan. The plan was completed this spring and shortly after, all eleven riverfront communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire all voted "yes" at their Annual Town Meetings to accept the "Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Stewardship Plan" locally-developed by the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee. On September 20, 2018 Congresswoman Niki Tsongas (MA-03) announced that she introduced a bill to Congress that would add segments of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Should Congress vote in favor of such, the President will then be asked to sign the legislation to officially designate the rivers as Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers. The full report and details of the study and committee activities is available at: <https://www.wildandscenicnashuarivers.org/>.

**Devens Special Events:** Throughout the spring and summer of 2018, the DEC permitted a number of special events such as the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Muck Fest, Berkshires to Boston Bike tour, Mustang car club car show, , and Clear Path New England's Dogs2Vets event and Motorcycle Charity ride. The 2018 New England Disc Golf Championships were also held in September and featured both existing courses on Devens (The Hill and the General) as well as a third temporary course that was set up around the various open space areas surrounding Rogers Field and Vicksburg Square. Since October of last year, the DEC has also issued a number of filming permits for various locations within Devens, including Mirror Lake, MacPherson Road, the former Grant Road Housing area. These filming permits have been associated with new TV series and feature-length films being produced at New England Studios. All permitted events were well managed and went off without any problems.



**Enforcement Actions:** Over the past several months, a number of enforcement issues have been successfully resolved, including an unpermitted discharge of wash water to the environment and a residential hoarding case. Monitoring and enforcement of the designated truck route has continued throughout 2018 with MA State Police, Devens Public Works and DEC Staff. Designated truck route reminder notices were sent out to various businesses and violation notices sent to businesses and trucking companies found violating the "No Trucks" signage on Buena Vista Street. Monitoring of these issues continues and Devens Engineering is in the process of conducting traffic monitoring to evaluate the speed and volume of traffic on Buena Vista Street between Saratoga and Jackson Road. This data will be used to help develop additional mitigative measures (beyond the signage, crosswalk upgrades, speed limit reduction, radar and ongoing monitoring and enforcement) that will help further alleviate traffic concerns of local residents and further improve the overall safety of this stretch of road.

**Board of Health Updates:** Water use restrictions remained in effect in Devens for most of 2018 as stream levels remained low throughout most of the spring and summer due to low precipitation levels. Restrictions were lifted in early October. With climate change and global warming trends creating warmer conditions, ticks, West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus threats have been increasing in Massachusetts for much of the spring and summer. Working with MassDevelopment, the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, and the State Department of Public Health, the DEC published numerous health alerts to raise awareness and provide the general public with tips and resources for protecting themselves and their loved ones from these serious viruses. The DEC also partnered with the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health to provide access to flu clinics this fall for all Devens residents and employees of Devens businesses.

MassDevelopment, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP), has released information about a health advisory alert regarding Devens drinking water and PFAS and PFOA contaminants



of concern. The MA DEP has is looking at setting an advisory level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for drinking water. These chemicals were discovered in concentrations above 70 ppt in one of the three drinking water wells in Devens. Out of an abundance of caution, this well was taken off-line in February until the MA DEP sets a final regulatory limit. TheDEC and Devens utilities notified all customers within Devens by mail and has posted this information, along with fact sheets and additional details on-line at:

[http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens\\_PWS\\_PFAS\\_Notification\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Devens_PWS_PFAS_Notification_Letter.pdf) .

**Website Updates:** The DEC continues to update its website with meeting and public hearing notices, staff reports, important community news and events information, and other general information on living, working and developing in Devens <http://www.devensec.com/news.html> . Recent news and events postings include public health information on West Nile Virus and free local Flu clinics. The Devens Sustainability page highlights many of the accomplishments of the DEC and its partners: <http://www.devensec.com/sustain.html> .

**DEC Facebook Page:** The DEC continues to keep the public informed through its own Facebook page. This page was launched to supplement the DEC website and provide an additional media outlet to help keep residents, businesses and interested parties up to date on projects, meeting announcements and notices from the DEC. Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/devensec/>

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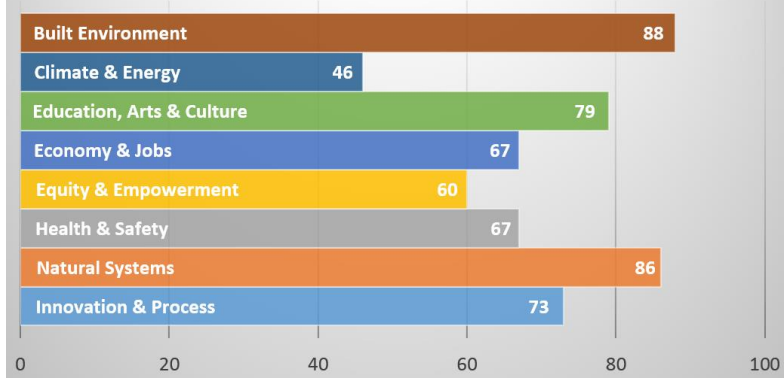
#### DEC SUSTIANABILITY INITIATIVES:

**STAR Community Rating System Leadership Program:** Throughout 2017, MassDevelopment and the DEC partnered together to participate in the STAR Community Rating System. STAR is the nation's leading framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability, encompassing social, economic and environmental performance measures. STAR helps communities evaluate their strengths and weaknesses across seven areas: the built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education, arts and community; health and safety; and natural systems. For instance, communities get credit for reductions in energy use or increased transportation access. STAR Communities provides a third-party verification process to ensure accountability.

Communities pursuing STAR certification accumulate points for their achievements across the seven goal areas, which are used to determine their rating. The STAR rating system contains 568 sustainability action items (social, environmental and economic) that evaluate to what degree a community is acting sustainably. There are three STAR certification levels: 3-STAR Community (250-449 points); 4-STAR Community (450-649 points); or 5-STAR (650+ points). **After almost a year of data collection and reporting, at the close of 2017, the DEC received notice that Devens had been awarded a 4-STAR Community Rating – the 70<sup>th</sup> STAR Certified Community in the United States (and one of only 26 communities that have achieved 4-STAR Certification).** Devens received a score of 530.8, which qualifies Devens as a 4-STAR Community, recognized for national excellence in sustainability.



#### Devens Overall % Score by Category







State Representative Jennifer Benson's District & Constituent Services Director Joshua Bedarian presents DEC Chairman William Marshall with the STAR Communities 4-STAR Certification Plaque for Devens.



STAR Communities 4-STAR Certification Banner flying proudly on Devens streetlight poles!

Some of the key sustainability attributes within Devens that stood out include:

- **Built Environment:** There are more than 900 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, well over the 20.3-acre STAR threshold. In addition, 100 percent of residents are within half-mile of a park and three-miles of an off-road trail.
- **Climate & Energy:** Devens demonstrated its commitment to diversifying its energy supply by maintaining a renewable portfolio standard of 10.5 percent for its municipal utility, and by installing several electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Economy & Jobs:** Devens supports a strong business environment. There was an 8.3 percent increase in the number of businesses from 2013-2016 and employment increased by 10 percent, while unemployment decreased by 20 percent from 2013-2015. In addition, Devens' workforce is on track to have 45 percent attainment of post-secondary degrees by 2025.
- **Education, Arts & Community:** The Devens Eco-Efficiency Center provides educational forums and services to help establishments implement sustainable business practices. There is a clear commitment to historic preservation in Devens. In recent years, 80 structures have been rehabilitated, including the adaptive reuse of structures for the United Native American Cultural Center, private residences, the Dragonfly Wellness Center and Natural Cafe, and more.

The Devens Reuse Plan called for the redevelopment of the former Fort Devens to become a model of sustainable redevelopment. A 4-STAR Community rating provides additional confirmation that MassDevelopment, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, and the Devens Enterprise Commission's collaboration continues to achieve the goals established by our host communities of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley along with the Legislature. This rating is a huge accomplishment that MassDevelopment, the Devens Enterprise Commission, Devens Residents, Businesses, organizations should all be proud of. The full report outlining the scoring for Devens is available on-line at: <http://www.starcommunities.org/certification/certified-star-communities/devens-massachusetts/>.

**Devens Street Tree Replacement Program:** Recognizing the social, economic, and environmental benefits that street trees provide, The DEC and MassDevelopment Devens Public Works have partnered to maintain and increase tree canopy cover in Devens through the development of a street tree replacement program. As street trees are damaged or die, Devens DPW has been replacing trees with a variety of canopy trees that are able to withstand urbanized conditions (poor soils, salt and snow from roadways). The installation of these trees is consistent with the Devens Complete Streets Policy in that these trees will eventually provide canopies that will create a sense of enclosure and help to naturally slow vehicles down. The trees will also provide shade and make the walking



and biking experience along the sidewalks and bike lanes more pleasant. The trees will also help absorb stormwater runoff (additional green infrastructure) and help extend pavement life and reduce heat island impacts through shading. A street tree inventory is being developed in order to better manage this program and identify gaps in existing street tree canopy cover. The DEC has set aside a yearly budget line item to assist in the funding of this program as it is crucial to the sustainable redevelopment goal for Devens (and they add to the beauty and character of Devens!!). The DEC has published an informational brochure to help educate businesses and residents about the triple bottom-line impacts of street trees in Devens:

[http://www.devensec.com/news/Benefits\\_of\\_Street\\_Trees.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Benefits_of_Street_Trees.pdf) .



Verbeck Gate New Street trees installed this past spring.

**Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Climate Action Plan:** Building off the successes of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and Devens 4-STAR Community Sustainability Rating, the DEC, in partnership with MassDevelopment is beginning work on a climate action plan. A climate action plan will establish Devens strategies and recommendations to inventory and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This plan will measure baseline emissions, set emissions reduction targets, include strategies to achieve targets and track progress over time. A GHG baseline inventory is critical to understanding current conditions and developing realistic reduction targets. Devens Operations are already demonstrating significant GHG emission reductions through its renewable energy portfolio. Highlighting these types of achievements is critical to further demonstrating our commitment to the Reuse Plan and the clean, orderly and sustainable redevelopment of Devens.



Developing a Climate Action Plan is directly in line with the Devens Reuse Plan sustainability goals but this will also build on our STAR certification and recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning work. Implementing this process would also benefit existing and future businesses in Devens by providing them with additional data to help businesses achieve their own corporate sustainability objectives. Completing an inventory and developing a reduction plan will also open Devens up to many increased opportunities for grant funding for capital improvements and ongoing operations.

**Biometrics of Design:** The DEC partnered with Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning on an innovative research project: "Seeing the 'Unseen' in Devens: A Biometric Pilot-Study to Better Understand the 'Unconscious' Human Experience at Devens, Massachusetts".

This study looked at how people unconsciously respond to different elements of the built environment, using one of the newest residential developments in Devens as a case study. The field work and research were conducted in 2017 and the final report was released in early 2018. The study concluded that the DEC's Innovative Development Regulations, combined with the architectural styles and layout of the homes and streetscape in the Grant Road housing project contribute to a more engaging development pattern that is visually more appealing, engaging and interesting to people. The full report is available on-line at: [http://www.devensec.com/news/Eye\\_Tracking\\_Devens\\_1\\_11\\_18%20report.pdf](http://www.devensec.com/news/Eye_Tracking_Devens_1_11_18%20report.pdf) . Phase 2 of this study is currently underway and will involve a comparison of the innovative form of residential development on Grant Road to that of a traditional suburban sprawl-type subdivision development to help understand if certain development forms are more stimulating to people than others. These studies will help us better understand how to design communities for people first, not cars.

